

Amendments to the Claims:

Please cancel claims 20 and 21 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1-4, 7, 22 and 25-28 are proposed to be amended herein. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below.

Please enter these claims as amended. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a substrate, comprising:
providing a substrate of a first material having a bare, relatively rough surface topography comprising peaks and valleys;
applying a layer of a second material to the bare surface of sufficient depth to cover the peaks, fill the valleys and provide an exposed, substantially planar surface of the second material of lesser roughness than the bare surface and thereover;
bonding the layer of the second material to the bare surface to provide an exposed, planar surface of the second material of substantially lesser roughness than the bare surface and extending thereover; and
removing the first material and the second material from the substrate from a side thereof proximate the bare surface by removing the second material covering the peaks until the second material and the first material comprising the peaks are concurrently exposed; and thereafter removing the first material and the second material at substantially equal rates.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein removing the first material and the second material from the substrate ~~at substantially equal rates~~ comprises planarizing the substrate from proximate the bare surface.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 2, wherein planarizing the substrate from the bare surface further comprises substantially reducing an initial thickness of the substrate

by removal of additional first material subsequent to removal of all of the second material.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein removing the first material and the second material from the substrate ~~at substantially equal rates~~ further comprises substantially reducing an initial thickness of the substrate by removal of additional first material subsequent to removal of all of the second material.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein providing a substrate of a first material having a bare surface comprises providing a semiconductor substrate.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein providing a semiconductor substrate comprises providing a wafer of silicon, gallium arsenide, germanium or indium phosphide.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein the bare surface comprises a ~~backside~~ back side of the semiconductor substrate.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising oxidizing the bare surface prior to applying the layer of the second material.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second material comprises a polymeric material.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second material includes at least one of the polymer groups comprising epoxies, acrylics, silicones, urethanes, siloxanes and Parylenes™.

11. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second material is a flowable material and is applied to the bare surface by one of screen-coating, stencil-coating, and spin-coating.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second material is at least a semisolid element and applying comprises laminating the at least a semisolid element to the bare surface.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the at least a semisolid element comprises one of a tape and a film.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the at least a semisolid element comprises a layer of the second material placed on a backing layer, and applying comprises applying the layer of the second material to the bare surface and removing the backing layer.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising applying a release layer to the backing layer before placing the second material thereon, and wherein removing the backing layer comprises releasing the layer of the second material from the backing layer using the release layer.

16. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second material is one of a thermoset polymer and a radiation cross-linkable polymer, and wherein the second material is applied to the bare surface in a flowable state and cured to a hardened state.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the second material comprises an epoxy, and the epoxy is partially cured to a tacky state prior to application to the bare surface and further cured to bond to the bare surface and harden.

18. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising hardening the second material on the bare surface.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein hardening the second material

comprises curing the second material.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Canceled).

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein removing the first material and the second material from the substrate ~~at substantially equal rates~~ comprises at least one of wet etching, dry etching, grinding, abrasive planarization, and chemical-mechanical planarization.

23. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising removing first material from the substrate prior to applying the second material to the bare surface.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein removing first material from the substrate prior to applying the second material to the bare surface is effected by a process including mechanical abrasion of the substrate.

25. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 24, wherein removing the first material and the second material from the substrate ~~at substantially equal rates~~ comprises etching.

26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein removing the first material and the second material from the substrate ~~at substantially equal rates~~ comprises planarizing the substrate from proximate the bare surface.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 26, wherein removing the first material and the second material from the substrate ~~at substantially equal rates~~ comprises etching.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 23, wherein removing the first

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material and the second material from the substrate ~~at substantially equal rates~~ comprises etching.

· Claims 29-33 (Canceled)